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ABSTRACT

This study on the role of university lecturers in supervision of practicum experiences for preservice teachers is based on a literature review that examined the ideal and actual characteristics, roles, responsibilities, tasks, and activities of university supervisors. A survey was conducted of 52 university supervisors, 93 supervising teachers, 35 school coordinators, and 79 student teachers in the practice teaching program for preservice teacher education at the Queensland (Australia) University of Technology. The survey questionnaire gathered data concerning ratings of actual and ideal supervisory elements in personal, professional, and procedural categories, and ratings of characteristics of practice teaching schools/centers. Results indicated that student teachers (compared to the other three groups) recorded the highest discrepancy scores between actual and ideal characteristics of university supervisors. University supervisors were seen to be most lacking in consistency, awareness of student teacher individual development, and stating their expectations clearly. They came closest to participant ideals for friendliness, being well-qualified academically, and treating other participants as fellow professionals. Compared to the other three respondent groups, school coordinators perceived the closest match between ideal and actual characteristics of university supervisors. (JDD)

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UNIVERSITY PRACTICUM SUPERVISORS : MARCHING TO A DIFFERENT DRUMMER?

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ABSTRACT

A decade ago, when pre-service teacher education was largely the province of Colleges of Advanced Education (CAE's), practicum supervision was relatively straightforward. Most lecturers supervised as a required part of their role and the supervision included some routine, regular observation of student teaching performance. Lecturers were also involved in determining the assessment rating for the student teacher through discussions with teachers and principals. Today things have changed after institutional amalgamations and the conferral of university status. Role changes mean that lecturers may choose not to be involved in practicum supervision, using their time instead for research and consultancy. Assessment of student teachers has tended to become a responsibility of the schools.

These developments over the ten-year period lead one to speculate as to just what lecturers do with regard to practicum supervision. Are their personal, professional and procedural characteristics such that they are providing a valuable contribution to the supervisory process? To what extent do they display such characteristics in their own view and from the point of view of others involved in practicum, that is the school staff and the students? Are the discrepancies so large that the worth of lecturers' participation must be seriously questioned? This paper, based on recent research, attempts to answer these questions.

UNIVERSITY PRACTICUM SUPERVISORS : MARCHING TO A DIFFERENT DRUMMER?

INTRODUCTION

A decade ago, when pre-service teacher education was largely the province of Colleges of Advanced Education (CAE's), practicum supervision was relatively straightforward. Most lecturers supervised as a required part of their role and the supervision included some routine, regular observation of student teaching performance. Lecturers were also involved in determining the assessment rating for the student teacher through discussions with teachers and principals. Today, things have changed after institutional amalgamations and the conferral of university status. Role changes mean that many lecturers choose not to be involved in practicum supervision, using their time instead for research and consultancy. Assessment of student teachers has tended to become a responsibility of the schools.

These developments over the ten-year period lead one to speculate as to just what lecturers do with regard to practicum supervision. Are their personal, professional and procedural characteristics such that they are providing a valuable contribution to the supervisory process? To what extent do they display such characteristics in their own view and from the point of view of others involved in practicum, i.e. the school staff and the students? Are the discrepancies so large that the worth of lecturers' participation must be seriously questioned? To answer these and associated questions, data were obtained from relevant groups as part of a broad study of the practicum. This article reports on one aspect of that study: the university lecturer.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a considerable body of literature which deals with the roles, responsibilities, tasks and activities of different participants in the practice teaching process. Some of the literature is descriptive of what appears to happen in reality; some is more critical in nature and argues for needed changes to the present role and activities of different participant groups; and some is idealistic in outlining what it is believed ideal supervisors or student teachers ought to do during practice teaching assignments. While the literature does not always directly address the desirable or actual characteristics of participants in carrying out their roles and functions, discussion of roles and responsibilities provides a valuable platform from which one may think about the qualities and characteristics needed for the participants to act in ways conducive to advancing the practice teaching process.

Yarrow et al. (1983) reported to the then Queensland Board of Teacher Education concerning the desirable characteristics of practicum supervisors. The report details the desirable characteristics of three groups of participants (college staff, supervising teachers, school administrators) as perceived by these three groups and student teachers. The perception of each group was examined with regard to the different qualities that were seen to be desirable for involvement in programs of school experience. Comparisons were then made across all four groups of respondents to identify areas of commonality and difference, in order to isolate conflicting views which might then form the basis of a set of specific recommendations for future action so as to resolve potential role conflict among the groups.

In an article reporting the study, Yarrow et al. (1984) examined the desirable characteristics of College lecturers involved in School Experience. All of the College supervisor's

personality characteristics were seen as important by all groups. In practice teaching, the most important personal qualities for supervising lecturers were that they were fair, consistent, approachable and supportive. While lecturers' own views often tended to fall at the extreme end of the range of perceptions recorded, there was again close agreement amongst all four groups of respondents that College supervisors should have the following professional characteristics: sound knowledge of the program; interest in student development; capacity for constructive criticism of students; and a willingness to share. Least important professional characteristics for College supervisors in practice teaching were listed as academically well qualified; organisational ability; and willingness to accept new ideas. The level of importance assigned to procedural characteristics of College supervisors varied markedly. However, qualities in this area that were generally valued most highly for lecturers involved in practice teaching, included provision of constructive advice to students; effective communication; provision of positive student support; and making adequate time available for students.

In a survey of forty-four early childhood teachers in South Australia, Briggs (1984) reported that teachers saw the main responsibilities of supervising lecturers as focussing on the role of counsellor - of themselves and of the student teachers. Thus, with regard to themselves, these early childhood teachers believed that lecturers should ensure that each teacher fully understood the expectations of the university; provide teachers with oral and written feedback relating to student progress; provide support to the teacher, especially in relation to report writing; support the ethos of the school; and ensure that students maintained confidence and professional ethics. With regard to the students, they believed that supervising lecturers should be readily available to resolve students' personal and professional problems; to visit students frequently and to give constructive criticism relating to each lesson observed; and

to be punctual in keeping appointments.

It may be that student teachers will value different behaviours and qualities of their supervisors more highly at different stages of their course, because students tend to have different concerns at particular points in time. Some evidence to this effect was found by Reed (1990) who used multiple regression to examine the perceptions of first, second and third year students of their practicum supervising teachers and lecturers. The analysis identified nine criteria that contributed positively to students' ratings of supervising teachers and eleven criteria that contributed positively to their ratings of supervising lecturers. There were four criteria that contributed positively and significantly to student ratings of both supervising teachers and supervising lecturers - enthusiasm; discussion of weaknesses with sensitively; making time to help; and treating the student as a colleague.

Duck and Cunningham (1985) have reported on the findings of a major study undertaken by the Queensland Board of Teacher Education, which included an investigation of the roles of supervising teachers and supervising lecturers and their adequacy, as perceived by student teachers and the supervisors themselves. Respondents rated tasks for the frequency with which they were actually carried out, as well as for how frequently they would liked them to have been performed. The roles themselves were identified through discussion with participants and through a survey of the literature including the relevant industrial agreement regarding teaching practice and various institutional handbooks.

From a group of nine supervising lecturer tasks, both students and lecturers agreed in relative terms, that the following tasks were performed most frequently by lecturers : making their expectations about school experience clear to students; observing students

teaching in the school; providing students with feedback on lessons taught; and encouraging students to show initiative in the way they teach. Lecturer ratings were consistently higher than those given by the student. Students and lecturers were generally in agreement on what the ideal role of the lecturer should be, although the latter believed they should more frequently observe students' lessons and provide them with feedback on these, than did the students themselves. Discrepancy scores between the ideal and the actual reveal that lecturers wanted to spend more time in schools teaching, and discussing their own lessons with the student teachers. Student responses clearly indicate that they would also have preferred to have lecturers much more involved in their practice teaching in the schools through demonstrating teaching strategies by teaching lessons in the school; discussing these with the students; assisting students with long-term curriculum planning; and providing feedback on student implementation of these plans.

A number of studies have examined participants' perceptions of the ideal qualities and behaviours of practice teaching supervisors. Edwards (1987) sampled fifty early childhood student teachers in each year of a three-year, preservice course in order to survey their perceptions of the most valued characteristics of their tertiary supervisors, both personal and professional. There were ten characteristics which were consistently highly regarded across all year levels. Students wanted their university supervisors to have qualities which included: attentive listening; establishing rapport; providing constructive advice and support and showing awareness of student potential and progress. Procedural characteristics which won high acceptance were demonstrating a thorough knowledge of practicum requirements and encouraging student self-evaluation during the assessment discussion. There was some evidence of differences in perceptions, depending upon the stage of the course reached. Thus, Edwards (1987, p.55) has noted :

> Whilst a reduced concern with assessment and an increased desire for assistance in integrating theory and practice indicated a less self-centred perspective, students appeared less autonomous and self-assured than might be envisaged by those responsible for their preparation programme. There was a disconcerting insistence on the tertiary supervisor arriving promptly for a pre-arranged visit to the Centre. Although this relates to the supervisor's consideration of others, it had been expected that the maturity and experience of more advanced students might have inured them against these anxieties.

Thus, such studies are useful, not only in helping us to understand better the qualities and actions that student teachers value most highly in their university supervisor, but also in illuminating the actual characteristics and inner feelings of the student teachers themselves at different stages of their course.

This review has mapped some of the territory covered directly by the present study - the ideal and actual characteristics of University supervisors involved in practice teaching. At the same time, consideration has been given to some of the literature concerned with the roles, responsibilities, tasks and activities of the practicum participants, as such perspectives are illuminating in a very direct way to any discussion of their desirable or actual characteristics.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Issues and Questions Investigated

It is clear from the literature review that the characteristics of participants form a set of significant variables critical to owner behaviours in the supervision process which, in turn, are significant determinants of worthwhile outcomes of the total practicum exercise. It is the nature of these characteristics of University supervisors and the differences between ideal and

actual characteristics, as perceived by those who work in these settings, that are the foci of this article.

The term "characteristics" may have a variety of connotations. In this study, participant characteristics are conceptualised as consisting of three allied, but different categories. First, there are **personal** characteristics such as being fair, consistent or flexible. These are generic, personal qualities of an individual that strongly influence a propensity to act in certain ways and are seen to be influential factors affecting interaction among participants in complex social settings such as schools and classrooms. Second, there are **professional** characteristics such as knowledge of the university and school program requirements for practice teaching. These characteristics are more specific to the practicum context and are seen to impact powerfully on the role performance of participants. Third, there are **procedural** characteristics, such as the extent to which participants establish rapport and develop trust with others in the program, or whether or not participants evaluate and reflect on personal and program effectiveness. Thus, procedural characteristics describe participant action or ways of behaving in the practice teaching setting.

Two research questions were formulated to serve as organisational frames for the collection and subsequent analysis of data. These were as follows :

(a) What are the profiles of the ideal and actual participants' perceptions of the personal, professional and procedural characteristics of University supervisors?

(b) What is the extent of any discrepancy between participants' perceptions of the ideal and actual characteristics of University supervisors?

Questionnaire Development

In order to answer the above questions, an instrument (the relevant sections of which are shown in Appendix A) was developed to obtain data about the *ideal* and *actual* perceptions of the major stakeholders in practice teaching. The starting point for the instrument development process was usage of the original questionnaire developed and used by Yarrow et al. (1983). That instrument contained sections in which practicum supervisors - tertiary staff, school administrators and teachers - were asked to rate desirable supervisory characteristics for each of these groups. Lists of desirable characteristics were derived from extended discussions and from written input by the personnel concerned. The questionnaire used in this study expanded this instrument to seek data on student teachers as an additional and important participant group. It also expanded the single dimension of desirable characteristics to incorporate two dimensions namely, the extent to which each characteristic related to an ideal supervisor or setting and the extent to which each characteristic was actually displayed.

Since the study was being conducted after a decade of change in higher education, and within an expanded context that encompassed primary practising schools, secondary schools and early childhood practice teaching settings - the lists of characteristics were also reviewed. This was achieved through wide discussion with representatives of the various interest groups and through written suggestions and reference to the current literature in the area. Thus, the approach used was one of "authoritative intentions" or use of expert opinions in arriving at a final list of items within each of the questionnaire categories. The questionnaire was initially trialled with a small group to gauge the time needed to complete the responses and to rectify any difficulties respondents experienced with understanding the meaning of any item. Some minor changes were made, including advice to respond with "n.a." if respondents

felt that a particular item did not apply to them or their practice teaching context.

The final version of the instrument contained thirteen items for each of the personal, professional and procedural characteristics categories and sixteen items representing characteristics of practice teaching schools and centres. Each of these was rated by respondents twice - firstly, as respondents evaluated each characteristic for the **actual** practice teaching situation and secondly, as they evaluated each for the **ideal** practice situation. The ratings were done on a seven-point scale with a rating of 1 indicating lowest level/rating/emphasis/importance and a rating of 7 indicating highest level/rating/ emphasis/importance.

Subjects

The questionnaire was administered to four groups of subjects who are important and interested stakeholders in the practice teaching enterprise. The four groups were university supervisors, supervising teachers, school co-ordinators and student teachers. The roles of both the university supervisors and supervising teachers in this study were a mix of evaluator, counsellor, instructor, observer, provider of feedback and manager. The role of school co-ordinator of practice teaching involves responsibility for the organisation and administration of the practicum at the school level, though there is also an important component of professional interaction with other participants in the school or centre setting. Ideally, the system supports a belief that student teachers should accept a major responsibility for their own professional development during practice teaching, in line with their individual, professional needs. This is achieved through a process of data collection, feedback and reflection about the emergent experiences of teaching and learning within a spirit and framework of professional partnership and collaboration with their supervisors.

The four groups of respondents in the present study were participants in the practice teaching program for preservice teacher education students at the Queensland University of Technology. They encompassed the whole spectrum of teacher education, from early childhood to secondary. Thus, the practice teaching settings involved included secondary schools, primary schools, pre-schools, kindergartens and child care centres. The student teachers involved were all in the final year of their course at university.

Approximately six hundred questionnaires were distributed at the end of second semester. The timing was such that follow-up was very difficult to impossible in most cases. In these circumstances, the return rate of 43.2% of completed forms is reasonable. Table 1 provides details of subjects who responded. A total of 259 completed questionnaires were returned to form the basis of the data analysis. These consisted of 52 returns from university supervisors, 93 from supervising teachers, 35 from school co-ordinators and 79 from student teachers.

TABLE 1 : Respondents by group and school sector

	Early Childhood	Primary	Secondary	TOTALS
University Supervisors	17	24	11	52
Supervising Teachers	24	48	21	93
School Co-ordinators	8	18	9	35
Student Teachers	10	54	15	79
Totals	59	144	56	259

Data Analysis

Each respondent provided a rating on a seven-point scale for their perceptions of ideal and actual levels for each of 13 personal, 13 professional and 13 procedural characteristics of their own and the other three groups of participants in the practice teaching system. Each respondent also rated the ideal and actual levels for 16 characteristics of their practice teaching schools or centres. Thus, the questionnaire required respondents to each make a total of 312 separate judgments about participants (4 groups x 13 items x 3 categories x 2 dimensions) and 32 judgments (16 items x 2 dimensions) about their practicum contexts.

All responses were entered into an ASCII data file and analyses were performed using the SPSS/PC+ V5.0 statistical package. For each respondent a set of 172 'Discrepancy Scores' was computed as the difference between the Ideal and Actual responses. Analyses included the generation of frequency distributions and descriptive statistics for all variables, and one-way ANOVAs on the respondent group mean discrepancy scores. An alpha level of .05 was adopted as the criterion for statistical significance and significant group differences were identified using the Scheffé procedures for post-hoc pairwise comparisons.

Ranks of ideal and actual means within each group, as well as tests of significant differences through use of mean confidence intervals overlap, were determined by inspection.

Procedures Used

In examining the questions concerned with the profiles and nature of participants' ideal and actual perceptions of the characteristics involved, means, standard deviations and ranks were used. Indications of overall perceptions were derived by adding ranks for items across groups. Ranks were used because it was thought important to give comparable weight and

credence to the views of each of the four groups. This is in keeping with the spirit of collaborative colleagues working as a team, rather than the hierarchical power structures prevalent in traditional practice teaching systems where student teachers, in particular, are often made to feel less important than other groups.

RESULTS

Overview of Presentation of Results

Each group of characteristics, Personal, Professional and Procedural, included thirteen items. Thus the results include 39 average discrepancy scores for each of the four groups of respondents. These are presented graphically in Figures 1, 2 and 3 for the three sets of characteristics. In each figure, the group discrepancy scores have been ordered from largest discrepancy to smallest as perceived by University supervisors. The intention of this arrangement was to facilitate comparisons between the results for University supervisors and the other three groups. Discrepancy scores, calculated as Ideal minus Actual for each individual, represent the extent to which University supervisors are perceived as falling below the Ideal.

Tests of significance are not reported in detail. Of the 39 one-way ANOVAS, computed for the three sets of items, 34 were significant at the .05 level. The five non-significant differences are indicated in the three figures. Post-hoc pairwise differences among groups were assessed using the Scheffé procedure at a joint alpha of .05. Statistically significant differences are reported in relation to each figure.

University Supervisors - Personal Characteristics - Group Discrepancy Scores

The data were examined to explore differences in the patterns of opinions held by the four groups of respondents - university supervisors, supervising teachers, school co-ordinators and student teachers. One-way ANOVAs were conducted on the mean discrepancy scores for the thirteen personal characteristics related to university supervisors. These group discrepancy scores are shown below in Figure 1.

The ordering is not directly or simply a reflection of salience - that would come from absolute scores (either Ideal or Actual). The size of the discrepancy is a measure of salience as an issue which may need to be addressed. ("Friendly" gets a high absolute value but the discrepancies are small. "Friendly" is important but not an issue.)

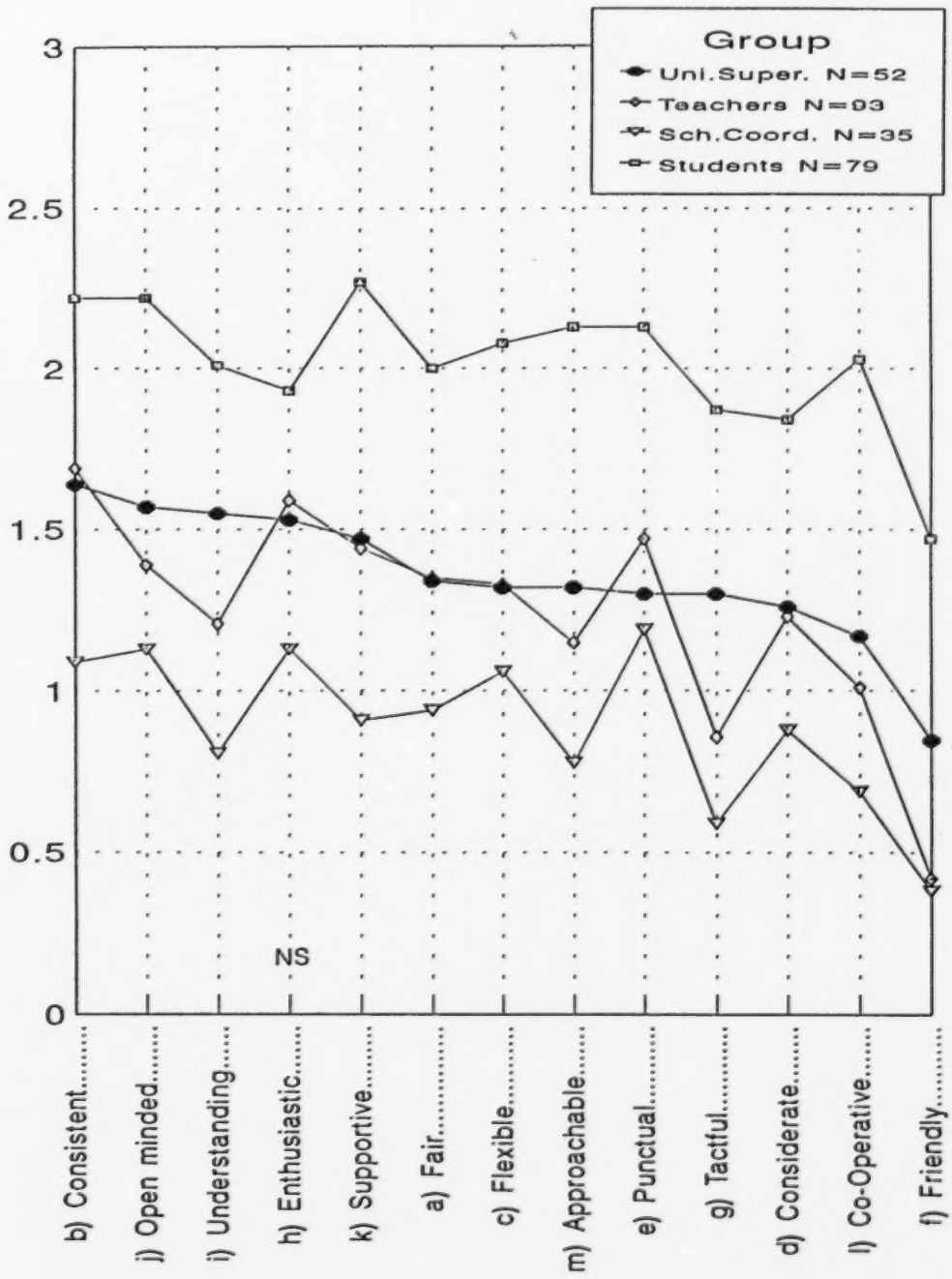
The most striking trend in the results is the difference in the views of student teachers about the personal qualities of university supervisors, when compared with the views of the other three groups Student teachers record the highest discrepancy scores on every one of the thirteen personal characteristics of university supervisors considered. In fact, student views about supervising lecturers' personal deficiencies differ significantly (at the .05 level) to the opinions of all three of the other respondent groups with regard to the degree to which supervising lecturers are supportive, flexible, fair, approachable and co-operative. These deficiencies are regarded by student teachers as being much more prominent in their university supervisors, than by any of the other groups.

Student teachers, when compared with their supervising teachers and school co-ordinators, also view their university supervisors as significantly lacking in the qualities of being open-minded, understanding, tactful and friendly. Finally, students differ significantly from school

FIGURE 1.

Personal Characteristics of University Supervisors

Group Discrepancy Scores



NS: Not significantly different at alpha .05

co-ordinators in the latter's relatively lower rating of the level of difference between ideal and actual in university supervisors being consistent and considerate.

Just as student teachers emerge as the group most highly critical of the actual personal qualities of their university supervisors, at the other end of the scale, school co-ordinators, when compared with the other groups, perceive the closest match between ideal and actual for university supervisors on every one of the thirteen lecturer characteristics examined. For eleven of these items, co-ordinators' views differ significantly from those expressed by student teachers. School co-ordinators even distinguish lecturers as being significantly closer to their ideal in tact and understanding, than these same university supervisors see themselves.

University Supervisors : Professional Characteristics - Group Discrepancy Scores

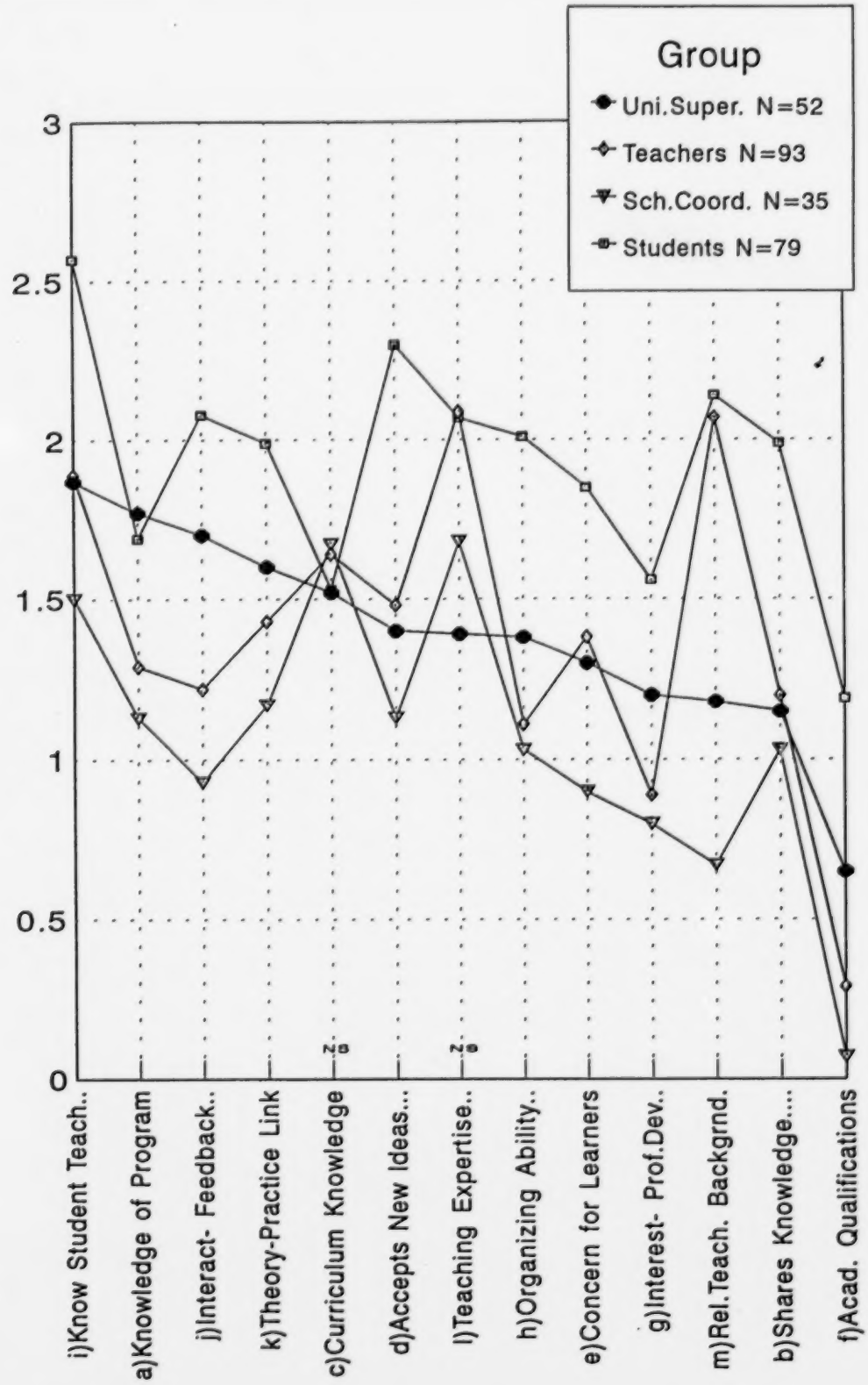
The data were also examined to explore differences relating to professional characteristics in a similar manner. In Figure 2, items are again presented in decreasing order of discrepancy means as perceived by University supervisors. Items are regarded as salient to the extent to which the professional characteristics of university supervisors, as they are displayed during practice teaching, fall short of the level discerned as ideal by respondents.

Again the most obvious trends in Figure 2 include the extent to which student teachers generally report their university supervisors as displaying professional characteristics far below the level they perceive as desirable and, at the other end of the scale, the views of the school co-ordinators, who generally see that lecturers actually portray characteristics much closer to the co-ordinators.

FIGURE 2.

Professional Characteristics of University Supervisors

Group Discrepancy Scores



NS: Not significantly different at alpha .05

Student teachers differ significantly from all three of the other respondent groups in their perceptions of the gap between ideal and reality, in terms of university supervisors being willing to accept new ideas and to share their knowledge and experience. Student teachers also differ significantly from both supervising teachers and school co-ordinators in their beliefs about lecturers' ability to interact in feedback sessions, their organising ability and that they are appropriately well-qualified academically. The views of student teachers and school co-ordinators also differ significantly for university supervisors on a further four items - their awareness of student teachers' individual development; awareness of theory and practice relationships; a concern for learners; and their interest in professional development.

In all these comparisons, with one exception only, the student teacher group, is expressed a significantly greater degree of dissatisfaction with the actual display of professional characteristics by their lecturers during practice teaching. The one exception is the case of school co-ordinators who, compared with student views, believe that university supervisors are somewhat less qualified academically than is desirable.

The only other significant difference in views concerns the relevance of university supervisors' teaching background. Lecturers themselves, when compared with both supervising teachers and student teachers, believe their actual teaching backgrounds fit quite well with what is needed. Students and teachers disagree with this point of view.

Overall, with regard to the professional characteristics of university supervisors, the views of student teachers differ significantly from those held by school co-ordinators on nine items, with supervising teachers on five items and with lecturers themselves on three characteristics. The views of supervising teachers and lecturers differ significantly on one item.

University Supervisors : Procedural Characteristics - Group Discrepancies

Thirdly, the data were examined to explore differences in the patterns of opinions held by the four groups of respondents regarding the ideal and actual procedural characteristics of university supervisors. Results for the procedural characteristics of university supervisors are presented in Figure 3.

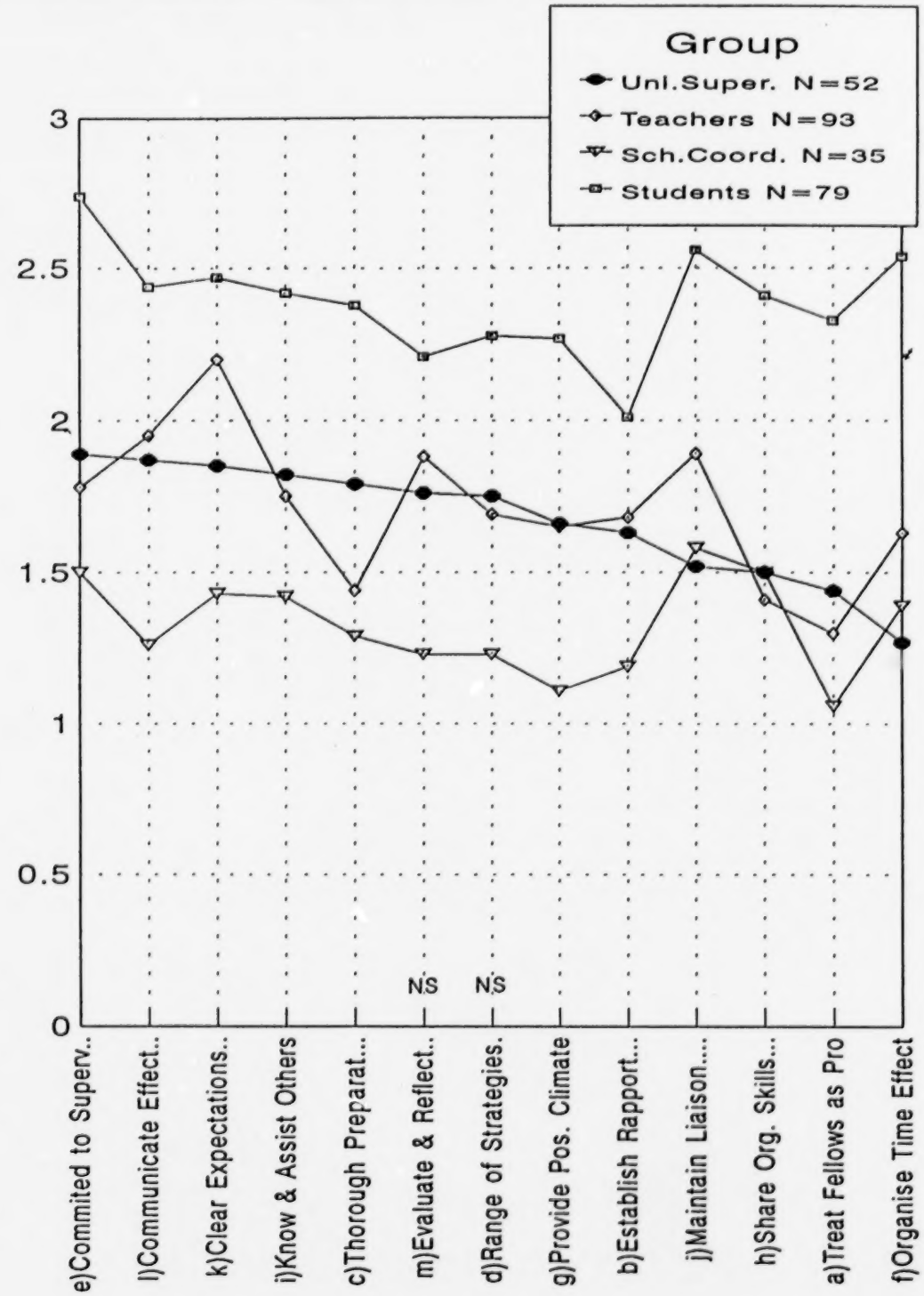
Once more, the most striking trend in Figure 3 is the difference in the views of student teachers about the procedural characteristics of university supervisors, when compared with the views of the other three groups. Student teachers record the highest discrepancy score on every one of the thirteen procedural characteristics of lecturers considered. In fact, student perceptions of the procedural deficiencies of their university supervisors differ significantly (at the .05 level) from the perceptions of all three of the other respondent groups with regard to the extent to which lecturers treat participants as fellow professionals and organise their time effectively.

Student teachers, when compared with co-ordinators and teachers in the practising schools, also see their university supervisors as significantly lacking in providing evidence of thorough preparation and being committed to each phase of the supervision cycle. Students differ significantly from supervising teachers and university supervisors in views of the latter's sharing their skill in organisation and administration. Students again perceive a much worse scenario. Student teachers also rate lecturers lower and differ significantly from school co-ordinators and the lecturers themselves on the extent to which the latter group maintains liaison.

FIGURE 3.

Procedural Characteristics of University Supervisors

Group Discrepancy Scores



NS: Not significantly different at alpha .05

Finally, students attribute a lower level of performance to lecturers, and differ significantly from school co-ordinators, on a set of five further procedural characteristics of the university supervisors. These are for the extent to which students see supervising lecturers falling short of the ideal in efforts to establish rapport and develop trust with others in the program; providing a positive climate for the planning and implementation of lessons; making time to get to know and assist fellow participants; stating expectations clearly; and communicating effectively with others in the program.

Just as student teachers emerge as the group most highly critical of the actual procedural characteristics of their university supervisors, at the other end of the scale, school co-ordinators, when compared with the other groups, provide the closest match between ideal and actual for supervising lecturers on most of the thirteen characteristics investigated.

Overall, there are nineteen significant differences between student teachers and other groups on their views of the ideal and actual procedural characteristics of university supervisors. Compared with perceptions of ideal ways supervising lecturers should carry out their supervision responsibilities, students see their lecturers being significantly less effective and efficient than do co-ordinators on ten items, than supervising teachers do on five, and than lecturers themselves do on four of the procedural characteristics investigated.

CONCLUSION

Discrepancy scores were calculated to provide a measure of shortfall between performance and display of qualities in actual practice and the levels thought to be ideal in the ultimate

practice teaching situation. The higher the discrepancy score, the greater the shortfall. This perceived low performance of supervising lecturers may, of course, be partly due to lack of knowledge or to misunderstandings of the exact nature of lecturer roles, as envisaged by the designers of the most recent practice teaching program. If participants, for example, have accurate perceptions of the actual qualities of supervising lecturers, and of what they do in practice, but have inaccurate ideas of what they should be doing, the discrepancy scores may be larger than they should be in reality. There is some evidence cited earlier to suggest that the current views expressed by participants as ideals for university supervisors have not kept pace with changes in their roles over the last ten years.

Hence, discrepancy scores need to be interpreted with caution, for they do not always necessarily highlight a real deficiency. For example, a high score may result because participants see lecturers and teachers encouraging students to trial a number of strategies they have devised themselves, rather than using proven methods modelled by the teacher. The latter may be a participant ideal, while the former is a program ideal. Lecturer or teacher action of the type described is therefore congruent with what the program designers want to occur and is highly commendable, but participants would actually ascribe a high discrepancy score because this action is not in keeping with their ideals of what should happen. Thus, it is important that participant views of the ideals for practice teaching are consistent with overall program objectives and current views of the appropriate roles of participants.

University supervisors are seen to be most lacking (highest discrepancy scores) in consistency, awareness of student teacher individual development and in stating their expectations clearly. They come closest to participant ideals (lowest discrepancy scores) for

their friendliness, being well-qualified academically and treating other participants as fellow professionals.

This study will be of most interest and value to those concerned with practice teaching and student teacher supervision. These are essential components of preservice teacher education and tremendous amounts of human and material resources are expended on them each year. It is vital that they be both effective and efficient. Data have been provided which can be used in a comparative fashion to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of the current practice teaching system. The profiles of perceptions of those closest to the action for the actual characteristics of the main participant groups are provided. When these are compared with features believed to be ideal, either by these same participants themselves, or by the program designers and policy makers, shortfalls and deficiencies can be pinpointed. Decisions on follow-up action are then more soundly based.

The findings of the study will benefit decisions in areas such as program planning and modification, professional development courses for supervisors, selection of practicum settings and supervisors, and future policy formulation on practice teaching. The findings can also provide participants with feedback and content for personal analysis and reflection, as a means of self-improvement towards more highly desirable personal, professional and procedural ends.

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